

DAVIS CITY PLANNING 1925-2005

File 1 of 3, Pages 1-20 of 54

John Lofland

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**Because of its detailed maps, this document is a large digital file.
In order to make it more up- and download manageable,
I have broken it into three pdf files labeled File 1, 2, and 3.
JL**

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INTRODUCTION

This is a specialized account of city planning—on land use and zoning—in the City of Davis, California over the years 1925-2005.

It is a specialized rather than a general account because the focus is on land use and zoning pertaining, mostly, to what is called "the 1917 City" rather than to the entire city.

In 2005, Davis encompassed a geographical area of just under 10 square miles. This was in contrast to four-tenths of one square mile at the time of incorporation in 1917. Referred to in City-staff jargon as "the 1917 City," this area extended (roughly) from what is now First Street on the south to Seventh street on the north. East-west, it was bounded, again roughly, by A and L streets.

But much of my focus is narrower than even the 1917 City. Toward the end of the twentieth century, Davis city planners began to conceptualize this original four-tenths of a square mile as consisting of four distinct enclaves. West-to-east, they named them University/Rice, Old North Davis, the Downtown, and Old East Davis (City of Davis, 2001b, 3). The four were given a special zoning and land use status and named a "Conservation District." Each of the four component areas was also assigned varying land use and zoning features.

Within this conservation district, my particular focus is on the enclave named "Old North Davis."

This specialized set of notes will, however, require frequent comparative and wider reference to zoning in other areas of Davis and of Davis as a whole.

To aid the exposition, I have adopted the strategy of focusing on **map** representation of land use and zoning. Therefore, relatively large-scale reproductions of relevant portions of such maps are prominent features of this document. Two dozen of these maps have seemed to me to capture the major trends and are reproduced (or extracted) here. Of course, I have also read the policy descriptions to which the maps refer and report them in the text.

My focus on maps tends to give this account a "snap-shot" quality. I skip from plan to plan and treat blow-by-blow processes—movie-type dynamics—only briefly. Therefore, the title of these notes might well be "Davis city plans" instead of "Davis city planning."

However, I do treat many matters in a process fashion, even if not to the degree possible or even desirable. So, I have elected to stay with the gerund "planning."

A. THE STORY AND THE POINT

Having completed the research, I think I see a "story"—or at least a trend—in these eight decades of land use and zoning maps and associated "general plans" and zoning ordinances. To put the reader in a better position to evaluate this story/trend, let me state it now.

At least with regard to the 1917 City, land use designations and zoning specifications have changed many times in some areas over 1925-2005. For some and perhaps many places, the land use and zoning we read on a map in one year is unlikely to be the same one we find a decade or decades later. Indeed, with regard to Old North Davis specifically, land use and zoning has been both frequent and "herky-jerky"—that is, "spasmodic, irregular and unpredictable" (a dictionary definition).

One prime purpose of this history is to display the detailed evidence for this "story"—this empirical assertion—for Old North Davis in particular and for some other areas incidentally.

In historical perspective and especially as regards the Original City, we are merely looking at the most recent (and now past) conception of appropriate land use and zoning. If the past is taken as the best predictor of the future, areas with histories of frequent zoning and land use changes are likely to continue to be that way.

B. FOUR PLANNING MINDSETS

Scanning the 80 years of Davis land use and zoning designations in broad terms, I think four phases or periods are evident.

The terms "conceptions," "visions" and "frames" also come to mind as labels for these four. But these terms and others like them imply degrees of articulateness and conscious choice that I think were not always present.

The term "mindset" has seemed to me more neutral as regards the relation of representation and reasoning about a representation. "Mindset" is therefore the term I have used here.

I. HUMAN-SCALE SLOW GROWTH, 1920s-40s. The initial mindset—of the 1920s, 30s and 40s—envisioned Davis as a compact city that would develop a civic center at Fifth and B Streets and perhaps grow modestly beyond its 1917 borders. Growth involved additions of structure in a sparsely built area as much or more than replacement of existing structures.

II. MEGA-SCALE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, 1950s-60s. After World War II, the initial mindset was thrown aside and replaced with one of explosive growth beyond the 1917 borders combined with demolition of much of the existing town and replacement by high rise buildings dotting a sea of parking lots. All this was in the spirit of the radical visions of Le Corbusier, a guru of urban design of the time.

III. HUMAN-SCALE CONTROLLED GROWTH, 1970s-80s. The so-called "Revolution of '72" in Davis politics was, among other things, a revolt against the Le Corbusier "high-modern" vision of the city. The opposing vision was best expressed in Jane Jacob's 1961 *The Death and Life of American Cities*, an image that took hold, for a time, in Davis planning.

IV. CONTESTED-SCALE HERKY-JERKY GROWTH, 1990s- —. Relentless growth pressures and actual major growth (some 13 thousand people a decade on average) resulted in a kind of rolling mixture of the Le Corbusier and Jacobs images in the later 1980s and after.

I should stress that my main interest here is not the merits or demerits of these mindsets. Instead these four and their combinations only give us the "why" of the main story I want to tell. The main story being, to repeat, that Davis land use and zoning designations have been—and are—fluid and frequently "herky-jerky."

(Although in the background in this paper, there is an astonishing story to tell at another time and place. Briefly, it is a story of city elites miscalculating and lurching from one grand and failed mindset to another, all the while being pushed around by developers and neighboring jurisdictions.)

**FINAL REPORT OF CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
 TO ACCOMPANY ORDINANCE NO. 40, NOV. 23, 1925**

RESIDENCE DISTRICTS OF
 CLASS I - SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS ONLY
 CLASS II - ALL KINDS DWELLINGS, FLATS, APARTMENTS AND HOTELS
 CLASS II-A - SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS AND MULTIPLE AND FRATERNITY DWELLINGS

BUSINESS DISTRICTS OF
 CLASS III - ORDINARY RETAIL STORES, BUSINESSES, PROFESSIONS AND DWELLINGS
 CLASS IV - SAME AS CLASS III PLUS PUBLIC GARAGES, OIL FILLING STATIONS, DYEING AND CLEANING WORKS AND UNDERTAKING PARLORS

INDICATION

PUBLIC USE DISTRICTS OF
 CLASS V - PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC BUILDINGS CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, PLAYGROUNDS, LIBRARIES ETC.
 CLASS VI - HOSPITALS, SANITARIUMS, ORPHANAGES AND MULTIPLE DWELLINGS

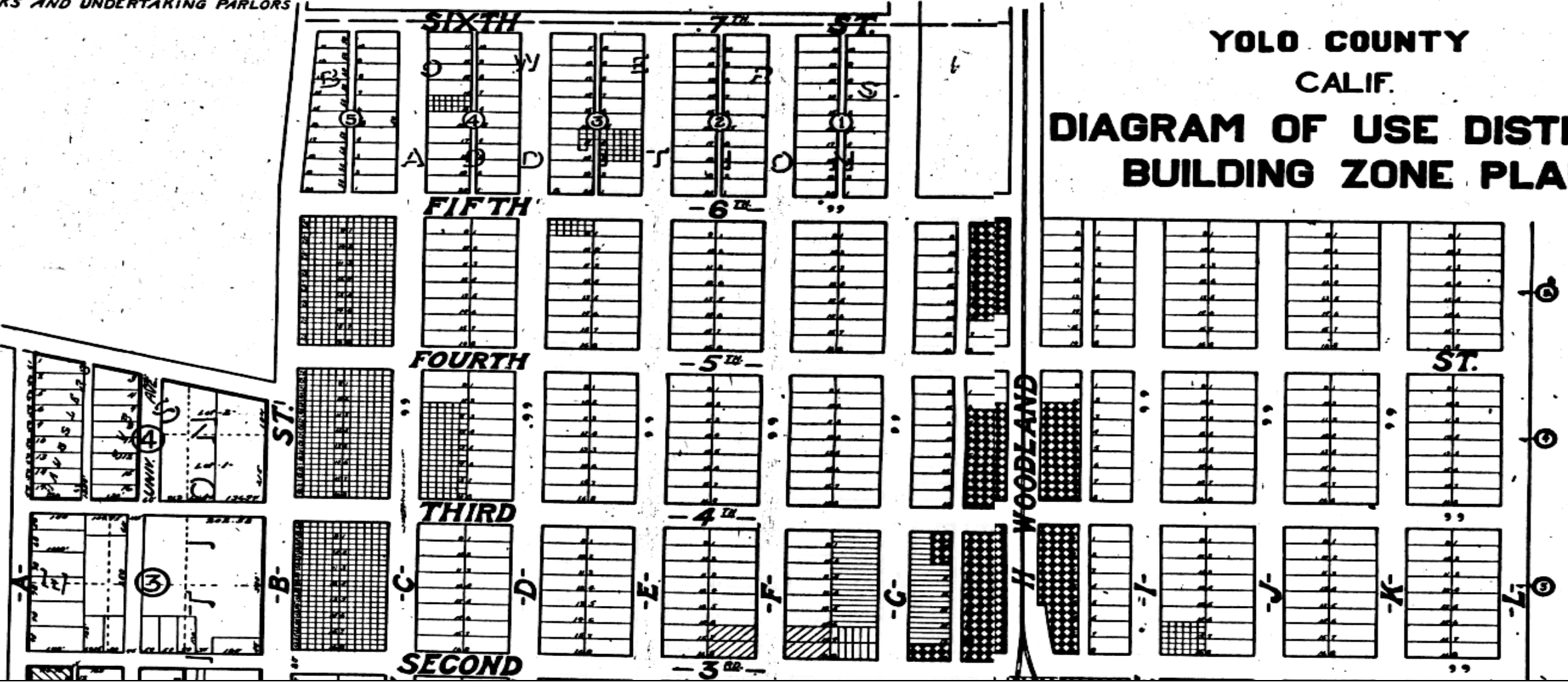
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS OF
 CLASS VII - ORDINARY INDUSTRIES AND WARE HOUSES LAUNDRIES ETC. NO NEW DWELLINGS.

MAP

THE CITY OF DAVIS

**YOLO COUNTY
 CALIF.**

**DIAGRAM OF USE DISTRICTS
 BUILDING ZONE PLAN**



[City of Davis Department of Public Works, Historic Maps Drawer.]

I. HUMAN-SCALE, SLOW GROWTH, 1920s-1940s

The first comprehensive zoning ordinance in the United States was adopted by New York City in 1916. By 1925, the year Davis started the practice, 320 cities and towns had already done so. New York State had the most, with 72, and California was second with 38 (DE, 3-20-25). When interviewed by Joanne Larkey in 1972, James F. Wilson, an early chair of the Planning Commission created to administer the Davis ordinance, was asked his view of what prompted zoning in Davis:

It was a combination of things. For instance, the fly problem in Davis was simply terrific because one could keep chickens, you could keep turkeys and cows. Many people did—right in town. Many other people thought you shouldn't have such things in town; and then the whole idea of city planning was taking hold all over the United States. It was a general movement so we adopted it. And right away some of the sanitary problems began to be solved (LA, 136).

As a further matter of context, it is important to know that the early 1920s was a time of great challenge for "the little town" as a type of community in America. Places such as Davis were losing population to the burgeoning cities. Towns were under cultural attack as bastions of bigotry and small-mindedness. (Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* was published in 1920 and *Babbitt* in 1922.) Davis specifically was under attack by University Farm supporters as being a backward place that did not even have water or sewage systems. Students were reported to be attending an agricultural college in Oregon in part because the town of Corvallis was seen as more sophisticated than Davis. Davis leaders responded to these attacks with a surge of civic projects, which included installation of sewage and water systems, systematic tree planting, sidewalk construction, road paving, and other improvements (LA, 134).

While it is important to point to larger social trends and proximate sanitary and health problems as prompting zoning (and planning more generally), we must also take account of individual enterprise and initiative in making both of them happen. At this level, it appears that one C. Harold Hopkins, owner of the Straloch Farm west of Davis and a "civil engineer and landscape artist," was something of a one-man moving force for planning the future of Davis, which of course included zoning (LA, 118).

Mr. Hopkins was a member of what was called the Citizen's Class at the Community Church, a group of male adults whose "Sunday school" seemed to have been less biblical than Davis civic and political. In the summer of 1922, he gave a talk to this group titled "The Little Town" in which he argued that "the future of the town should be looked forward to for a period of at least 25 to 50 years and programmed accordingly" (LA, 126; DE, 7-14-22).

Months of discussion ensued, leading, a year later, in June of 1923, to Mr. Hopkins using his engineering and artist training to unveil what we would today call a land use map depicting Davis twenty-five years in the future. No copy of this map is known to have survived, but its features are reported to have included a civic center on the block bounded by Third-Fourth and B-C Streets (the present Farmer's Market block). The block immediately north was planned as a town center plaza.

A. CHARLES H. CHENEY DIRECTS PLANNING

Discussion of zoning and planning then stalled. A little more than yet another year later, in December of 1924, on a trip to Los Angeles, Hopkins visited a man named Charles H. Cheney, a well-known city planner. Back in Davis, Hopkins reported that he had aroused Cheney's interest in planning Davis and had persuaded him to do so for an "extremely low" fee (LA, 127; DE, 12-19-24).

Enlisting the social and financial support of the Davis Business Men's Association (later renamed the Chamber of Commerce), Cheney was brought to Davis on January 19, 1925. He looked around the town that afternoon and addressed an evening banquet held at the newly completed Terminal Cafe. Hosted by the Business Men's Association, the attendees included representatives of several town groups.

Cheney told the assembled that planning was not merely a matter of "putting out a few trees and trying to make a show in front, but the question of your fundamental community building . . . You have the opportunity now to take hold of your situation. This city is not spoiled very badly, nothing here is very alarming, but . . ." (LA, 134).

The some 60 attendees unanimously adopted a resolution, offered by Dr. Bates, declaring that "we are in favor of going ahead and having our city planned and all that follows it in the consequence" (LA, 134, 135).

The matter then went to the Board of Trustees (later called the City Council), which formally created a planning commission on February 16, 1925. The Board also contracted with Cheney to guide the commission in drawing up a zoning ordinance and a general plan.

1. THE 1926 ZONING ORDINANCE. The zoning ordinance was worked on first. One set of Minutes of the Commission, reproduced in the next column, suggested that Mr. Cheney had considerable influence regarding it. Indeed, it officially deferred to him in virtually all matters.

The zoning scheme provided that "certain areas within the city limits have been restricted to single family dwellings. Other zones . . . are limited to dwellings of any kind . . . Business areas and industrial locations are also set apart in the plan" (DE, 11-20-25, p. 1). In its final

report on the proposed zoning ordinance, the Commission urged adoption for many reasons, which included that:

it will insure the permanence of character of districts once established, . . . encourage the maintenance of homes and home neighborhoods [and prevent] . . . the scattering and intrusion of inappropriate and destructive use of buildings, which deteriorate and decrease property values (City Planning Commission Statement, 1925, Davis City Planning Commission File, Yolo County Archives).

The "Building Zone Ordinance" (Ordinance No. 40) was adopted on February 15, 1926.

The top portion of the zoning map the Commission produced in late 1925 is shown on **Map 01** on page 4. Some of the more important and interesting features of this excerpt and the entire map include the following.

Meeting of Davis City Planning Commission
May 23, 1925.

Present: Covell, McBride, Proctor, Wilson and Plant.

Absent: Spogherd, Beckett.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted.

Resolved that this commission shall take no definite action upon any matter coming before it within the realm of its authority without first referring such matter to Mr. Charles H. Cheney the expert employed by this city, for his recommendations thereon, and that the secretary shall immediately refer the said matter to Mr. Cheney.

Regarding the site for the civic center, Mr. Cheney recommended:

(a) Block bounded by B, C, 2nd and 3rd streets.

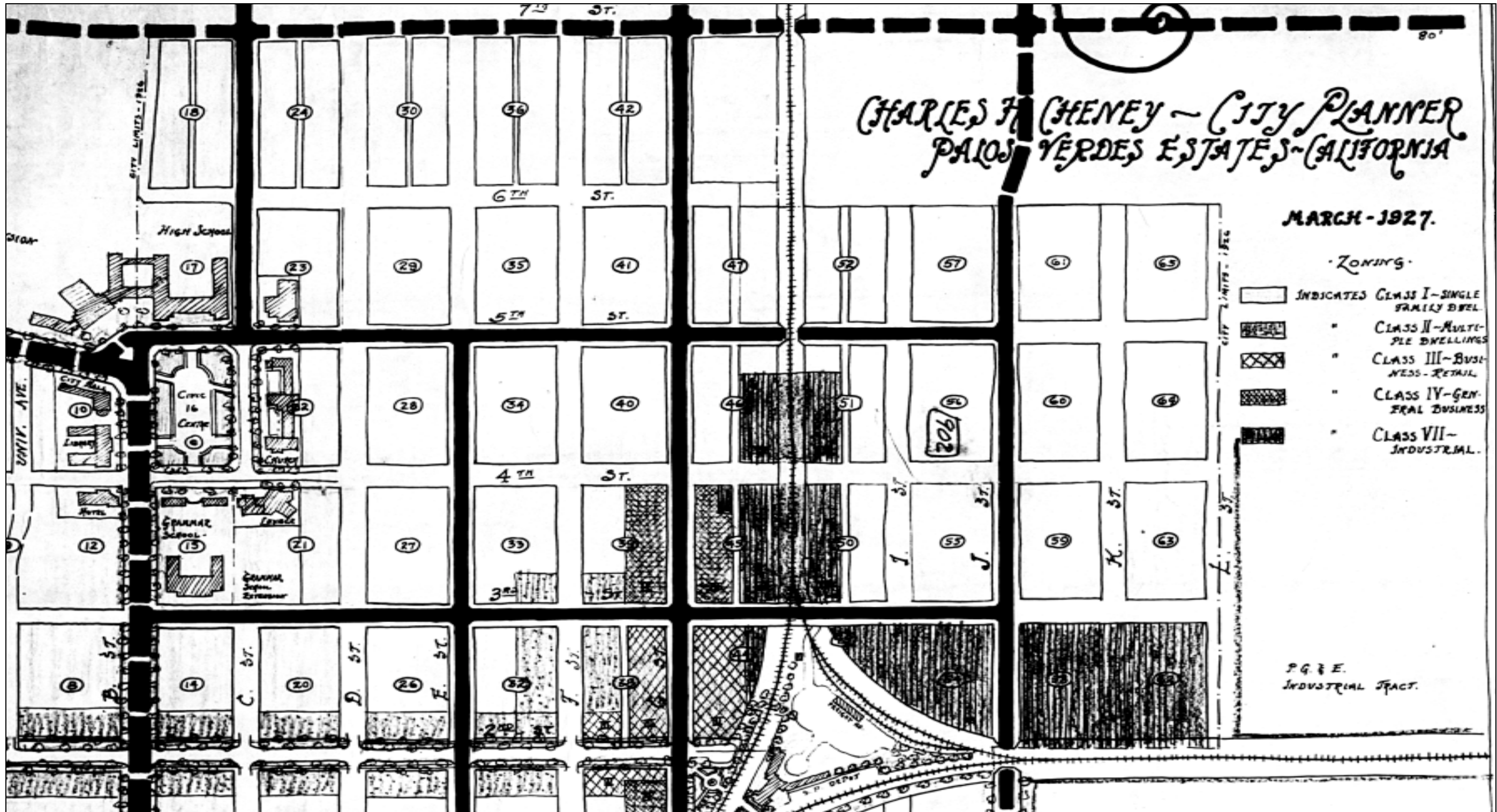
(b) " " " B, C, 4th and 5th streets.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved that the block bounded by B and C streets and 4th and 5th streets in this city is most ideally situated for the purpose of a civic center and that it is the opinion that the City acquire said block for such purpose, and that we do recommend to the board of trustees of said city.

F. A. Plant
(acting secretary)

02. 1927 "City Plan of Davis, Calif" (Excerpt)



[Hattie Weber Museum of Davis.]

1. The largest part of the city is zoned "Class I – Single Family Dwelling Only." Virtually all of the three areas now called University/Rice, Old North, and Old East were so zoned, as was what is now called the "Downtown."

2. Class II and III zones, for all other types of residences, are concentrated in the south and southwest portions of the City. In particular, Second Street (still called First at that time) between the railroad depot and the campus was zoned Class II or III along both sides for most of that distance. Indeed, Second Street between the campus and A Street appears to have been planned as a multiple-dwelling row.

2. THE 1927 CITY PLAN. Although there was definitely a detailed "Building Zone Ordinance" that went on for seven triple-column pages, I have not been able to find a written city plan document that accompanied the "City of Davis, Calif." map shown as **Map 02** (excerpted on page 6). Indeed, the legal status of **Map 02** is unclear, although it did seem to guide people's thinking to a degree.

That degree mostly involved the idea and plan to purchase the block bounded by B-C-Fourth-Fifth Streets for the purpose of eventually making a city-center plaza and city center there (the idea that C Harold Hopkins had put forth in 1923). The B-C-Fourth-Fifth block was eventually purchased. But most of the buildings seen at B and Fifth in **Map 02** were never built—specifically, the hotel, library and city hall.

In the interview with Joanne Larkey mentioned earlier, Planning Commission Chair James F. Wilson commented that "the plan [of 1927] doesn't seem to have been carried out to any great extent." Instead, "the plan was implemented by a zoning ordinance and most of our effort was directed toward having people live up to that" (LA, 140).

The grammar school, a high school and the Community Church were already envisioned as parts of a new city center before Cheney drew up his map. In this sense, Cheney elaborated on an existing trend to place civic and civic-like buildings near B and Fifth streets.

3. THE CHENEY MAP AS A MAP. According to Joanne Larkey, with whom I spoke about **Map 02** in the Fall of 2004, the original was quite large, perhaps three by four feet. Moreover, it was in color (LA, 159). As a rather spectacular artifact of Davis history, it was still in the City's possession at the time of Davis history exuberance in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed, for a time in 1972 and 1973 it was on display at the Fourteenth Street Davis Branch of Yolo County Library (LA, 159).

But then, Mrs. Larkey told me, it was sent to a local framing shop to be installed in a proper frame. For reasons that remain unknown, the map never returned from the shop and has never been seen again.

4. CHENEY'S FUTURE DAVIS. What sort of Davis did Mr. Cheney see 25 or so years into the future?

1. A first matter of note is that Davis circa 1952 was projected to be not much larger than in 1927, as seen in the entire map (below on this page). College Park is shown, which implies that area to the west would be annexed. But there are no annexations to the north or east.

2. The area between First Street and the railroad and west of the subway, is shown as sports fields. In fact, that area became a mall and residence area.

3. Three additional railroad underpasses were projected, one each under Fifth, Seventh, and J Streets. (Richards underpass was projected to stay as it was—and still is.)

4. As also seen on the zoning map (**Map 01**), most of Second Street between the campus and the railroad was depicted as "Class II, multiple dwellings," a future that did not happen.

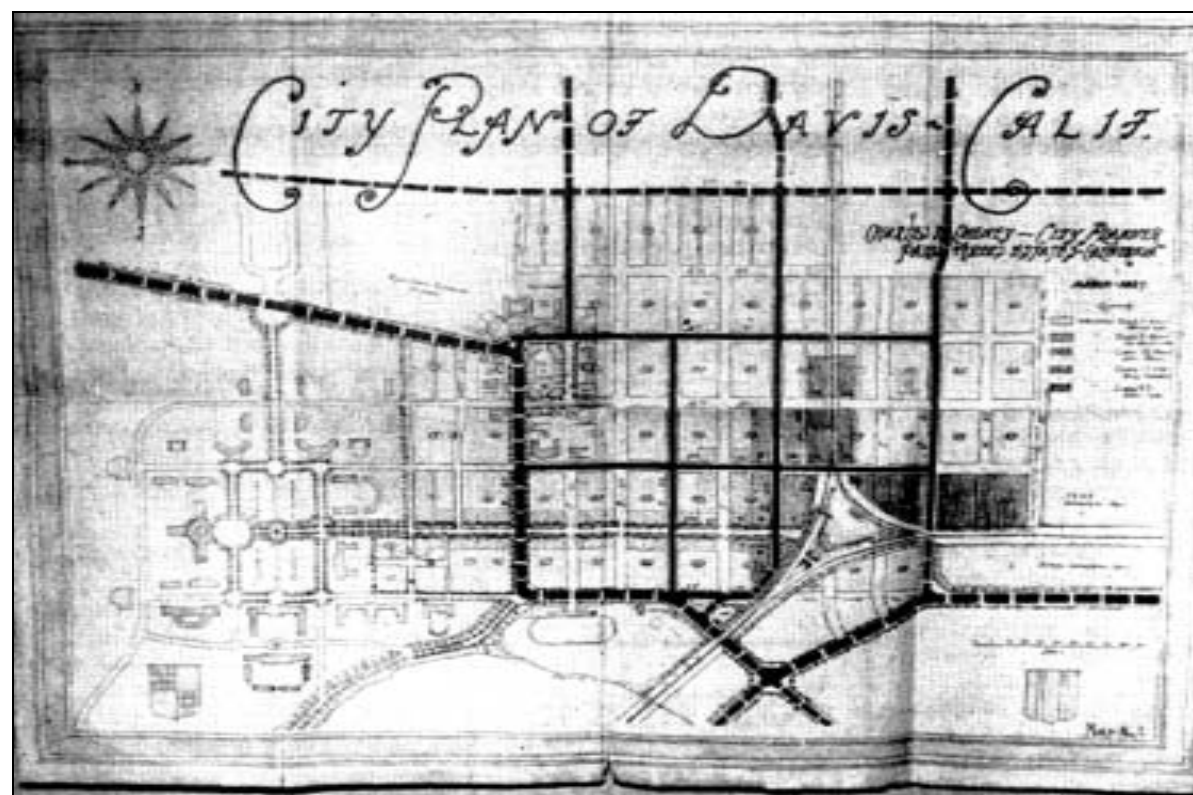
5. "A profusion of landscaping . . . enhances the railroad depot," Larkey has observed (LA, 118).

6. Cheney incorporated the then-existing plan for construction at the University Farm into this map. As can be seen below, virtually none of it was ever built.

7. The dotted heavy-line on B Street and turning west projected a transcontinental highway continuing to run through Davis. In fact, Davis would be by-passed only 15 years later (1942) by a flanking new road to the south.

8. A broad boulevard entering Davis from the west and approaching what is now Central Park was conceived to be the new city entrance. Creating such an entrance was one reason the Planning Commission worked hard for many years to buy up all the lots in the Fourth-Fifth-B-C streets block (Lofland, 2004:111-112). But, the plan became obsolete when the highway bypassed Davis to the south.

9. Most pertinent for the main theme of these notes, the great bulk of the city was to be "Class I — single family dwel." This is especially evident for the areas now called Old North Davis and Old East Davis.



[LA, 118 and the *Davis Enterprise*, December 30, 1972.]

CORRECTED MAP FOR THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION TO ACCOMPANY ORDINANCE NO. 40, NOV. 23, 1925.

DIAGRAM OF USE DISTRICTS

BUILDING ZONE PLAN

FOR

THE CITY OF DAVIS

YOLO COUNTY







CALIFORNIA




AS AMENDED TO JUNE 30, 1933.

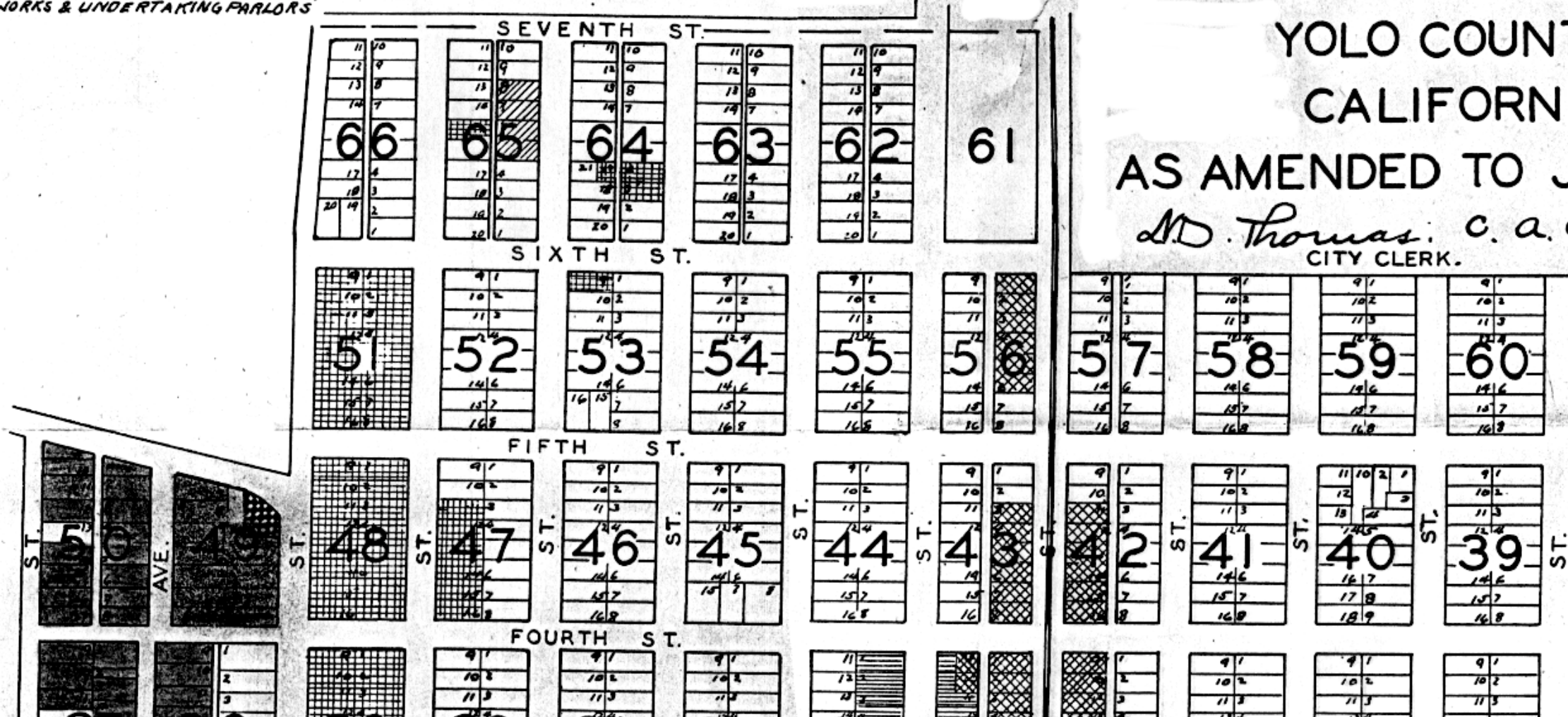
M.D. Thomas, C. A. Correll,

CITY CLERK.

MAYOR.

- RESIDENCE DISTRICTS OF**
-  CLASS I SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS ONLY.
 -  CLASS II ALL KINDS OF DWELLINGS, FLATS, APARTMENTS AND HOTELS.
 -  CLASS II-A- SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS AND MULTIPLE AND FRATERNITY DWELLINGS
 -  CLASS II-B- GASOLINE OR OIL SUPPLY STATIONS.
- BUSINESS DISTRICTS OF**
-  CLASS III ORDINARY RETAIL STORES, BUSINESSES, PROFESSIONS & DWELLINGS
 -  CLASS IV SAME AS CLASS III PLUS PUBLIC GARAGES, OIL FILLING STATIONS, DYEING & CLEANING WORKS & UNDERTAKING PARLORS

- PUBLIC USE DISTRICTS OF**
-  CLASS V PUBLIC OR SEMI-PUBLIC BUILDINGS, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, PLAYGROUNDS, LIBRARIES, ETC.
 -  CLASS VI HOSPITALS, SANITARIUMS, ORPHANAGES AND MULTIPLE DWELLINGS
- INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS OF**
-  CLASS VII ORDINARY INDUSTRIES & WARE HOUSES, LAUNDRIES, NO NEW DWELLINGS



CORRECTED FOR

ORDINANCE	DATED
43	Dec. 27, 1926
44	Apr. 25, 1927
49	Apr. 28, 1928
50	Oct. 8, 1928
51	Nov. 26, 1928
53	Apr. 2, 1929
54	Sep. 16, 1929
55	Nov. 25, 1929
56	Feb. 17, 1930
61	Jun. 20, 1932
63	Aug. 16, 1932
64	Jan. 16, 1933

The land use and zone categories and designations initiated in 1925 and 1927 remained relatively unchanged for some years.

Even so, both were altered or "corrected" to a degree. **Map 03** (on page 8), is dated January 16, 1933. In the lower right-hand corner we see that this is the twelfth change in the map adopted on November 23, 1925.

(Excerpted here, Maps **01** and **02** are reproduced in full and discussed more fully in Lofland, 2006.)

B. OLD NORTH DAVIS "SPOT ZONED"

Of particular note for the purposes of this story, we see that the four lots numbered 5, 6, 7, and 8 on D street between Sixth and Seventh Street have been rezoned. They have gone from Class I, "single family dwellings only," to Class II, "all kinds of dwellings, flats apartments and hotels" (quote from the upper left portion of **Map 03**, page 8).

Virtually no records of City activities before the 1960s and even later are known to exist. But, for reasons no one can now explain, a few scattered files of the Planning Commission have survived and are in the possession of the UC Davis Special Collections or the Yolo County Archives. Letters and Minutes explaining this odd instance of "spot zoning" are among them.

The explanation begins with a letter dated March 24, 1927 by one L.N. Irwin and addressed to the Board of Trustees. In it, Mr. Irwin reports that "upon the rear of each . . . [lot], prior to the enactment of the Zoning Ordinance, I constructed a small dwelling with the intention at a future date of constructing further dwellings so as to create a bungalow court." But now:

Under the present condition, I can build no further dwellings on said lots unless the present buildings should be abandoned as dwellings and used as garages . . . I therefore petition your honorable body to amend your zoning ordinance so as to change the classification of said property from Class I to Class II.

The April 6, 1927 Minutes of the Planning Commission, reproduced to the right on this page, show that Mr. Irwin's petition was granted for two reasons, one being that he had started his project before zoning was adopted.

The second reason given is of particular note: *the location is remote*. The four lots are so far from the center of things that the increased density would not matter.

This view of the character of Davis was not odd or idiosyncratic. The prevailing mindset right up through the end of World War II was of a

Davis centered on Second and G Street in which a place as distant as Sixth and D was remote. For example, just after World War II,

Betsy and Joe Truffini planned to build a gas station at Fourth and G. Town leader Sam Brinley admonished them not to do so because that location was too far from the center of town and no one would go that far out of their way to patronize them. In reporting this admonition, Mrs. Tuffini also recalled that she and her husband lived far out of town at that time, which was at G and Eighth streets (The Davis Enterprise, *Those Who Make Memories*, p. 53).

Subsequently, the City of Board of Trustees approved the Commission's recommendation

(There are other notable aspects of the Planning Commission minutes reproduced just below on this page. I mention only two: the meeting had only one item on the agenda and lasted about half-an-hour.)

Meeting of the Davis City Planning Commission,
April 6, 1927

Present: Chairman, Wadsworth, Plant, McBride and Beckett.

Meeting called to order at 5:15 P.M. Reading of minutes of previous meeting dispensed with.

Mr. Wadsworth presented a petition from Mr. L. N. Irwin asking that lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Block 4, Bowers addition to the City of Davis be removed from Class 1 and placed in Class 2 in order to permit the construction of additional dwellings upon these lots.

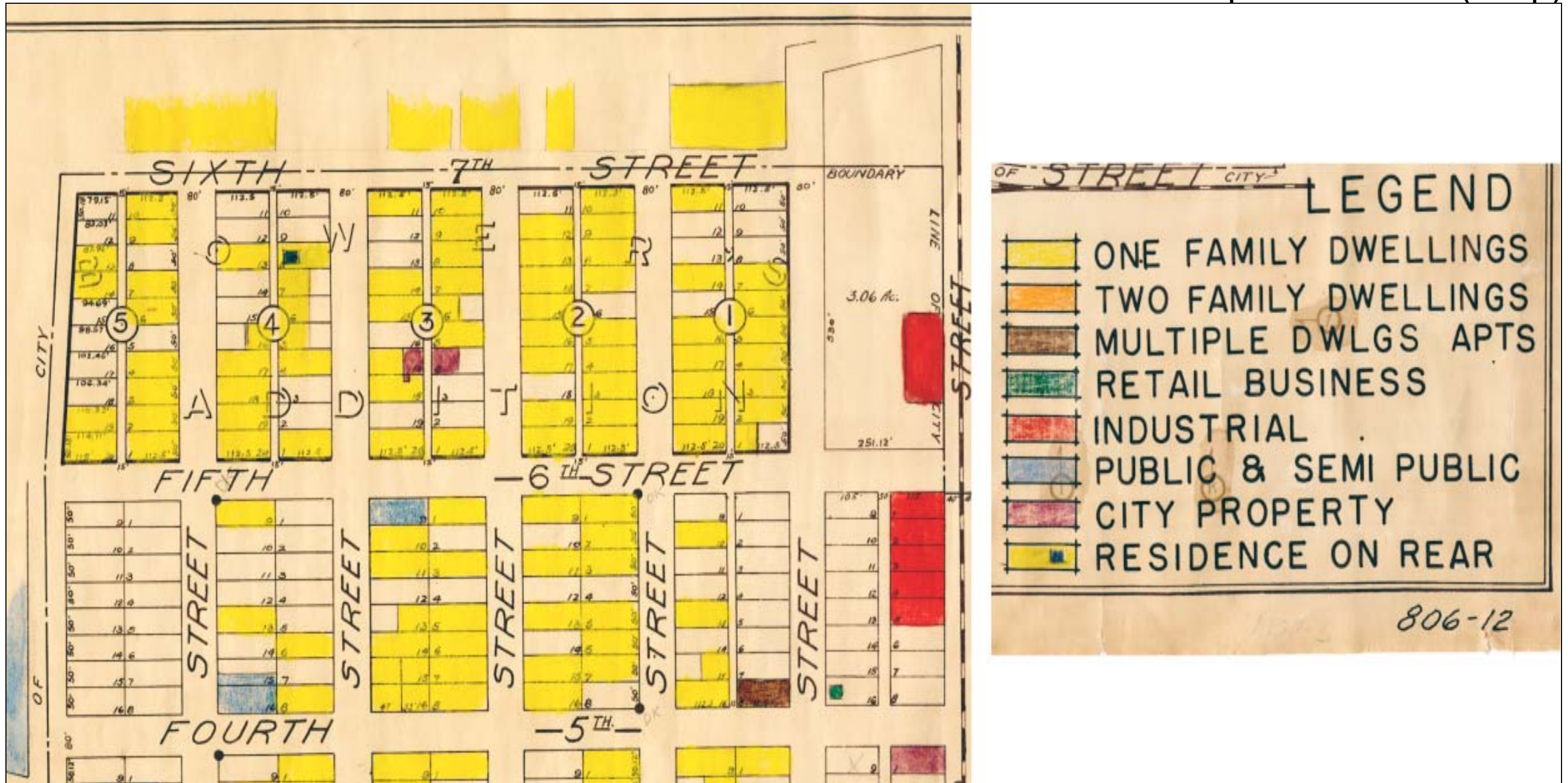
After a short discussion on which it was pointed out that Mr. Irwin had started the proposed development before the enactment of the zoning ordinance and also that because of their remote location, it was moved by Mr. Plant, seconded by Mr. McBride that the petition be granted. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

S. H. Beckett,
SECRETARY.

[Davis History Collection Box D-361, UC Davis Special Collections.]

04. 1938 Map of Actual Land Use (Excerpt)



[City of Davis Department of Public Works, Historic Maps Drawer.]

Mr. Irwin went on to complete what he called Irwin Court by constructing two larger homes on the front of lots 5 and 8 (621 and 633 D) in the late 1930s. The front portion of the middle two lots (numbers 7 and 8. 623 and 631 D) were left as an open court (Lofland, 1999: 72-73, 129-130).

I provide detail on this "spot zoning" because this was the initiating episode in a long-term planning misstep that continues to this day. Moreover, what happened with those four lots on D Street shows, early and in miniature, processes of changes in land use and zoning mindsets that will be writ-large on the whole of Davis.

C. 1938 ACTUAL LAND USE

Map 04 on p. 10 is an excerpt from the earliest known map representation of what is actually on lots in a zoning sense as opposed to what zoning said should be there. (A small reproduction of the entire map appears to the right on this page. The entire map measures 18 by 26 inches.)

This map is also distinctive in being in color and clearly colored by hand. For this reason the copy from which I reproduced the excerpt may well be the only copy ever made. (The original is in the drawer of historic maps at the City of Davis Department of Public Works.)

On this excerpt, the slightly shaded lots are, on the original, a bright yellow, the code for "one family dwellings." This means that the dominant color of the entire map of Davis is yellow (on a beige, parchment paper background).

Lots with "two family dwellings" are in orange, of which there are only three in the entire city. "Multiple Dwlg Apts" are dark brown and there are 30 of them. These are clustered in the southern University/Rice area (twelve) and seem primarily to be fraternities.

Focusing on Old North Davis, yellow is the by far dominant color, followed by the background beige, because, as can be seen, many lots are still empty.

Among other colors, the northwest corner of Fifth and G is brown and seems to represent a large house turned into apartments.

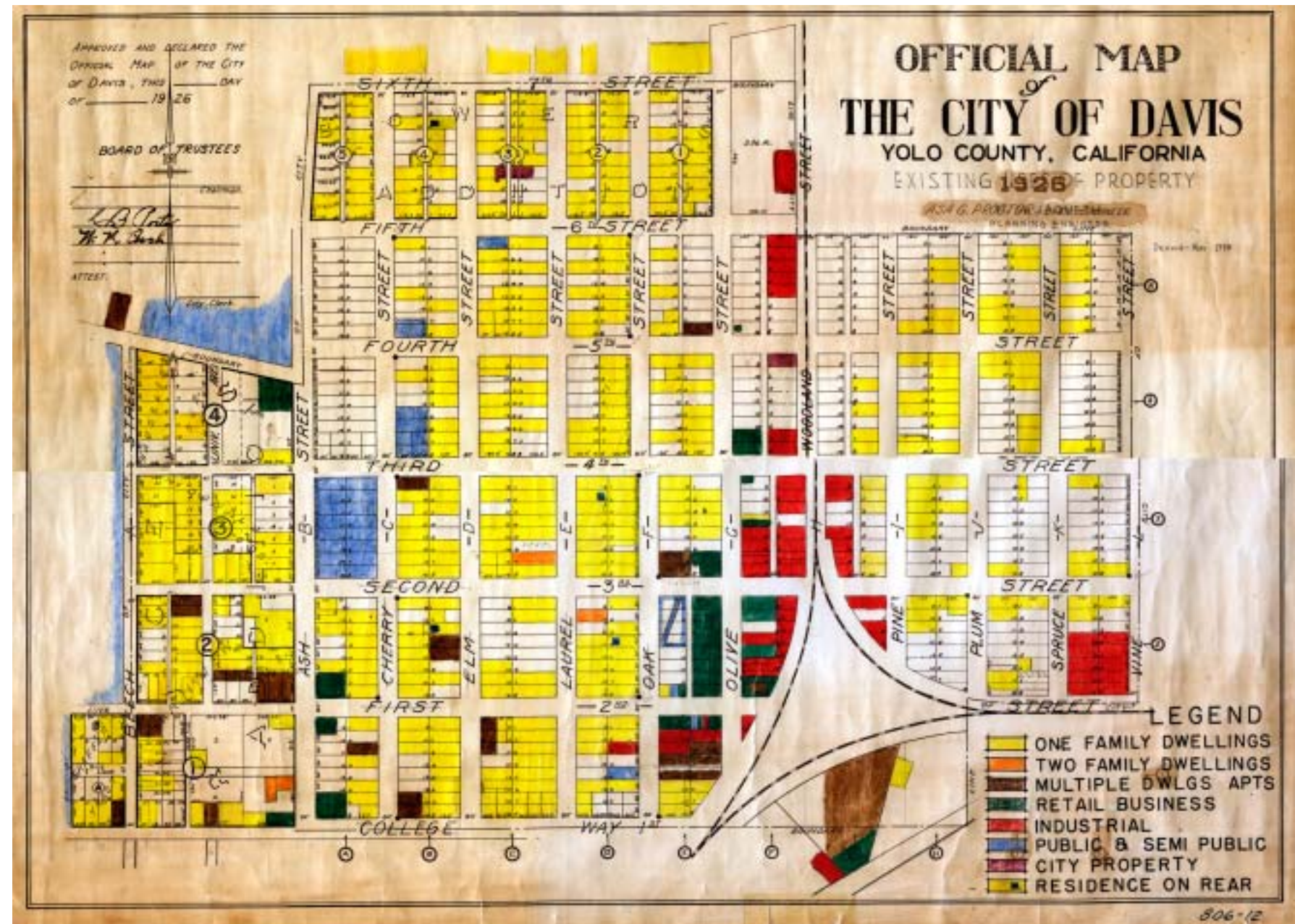
The northeast corner of Fifth and C and the southeast corner of Sixth and D are in blue, meaning "public and semi-public," which are the Catholic and Christian Science churches, respectively.

Spanning the alley in the 600 hundred block between D and E a red block indicates "city property," which are the City's water wells.

Following up on the spot zoning of Irwin Court on D Street, we observe that the four lots have not been zoned two family or multiple (brown). Instead, a new category of "residence on rear" has been created, using the symbol of a small green square on a yellow lot. There are four of them in the entire town. Only one is in the Old North, at 631 D. Irwin had not yet built the second house he was allowed at 621 D.

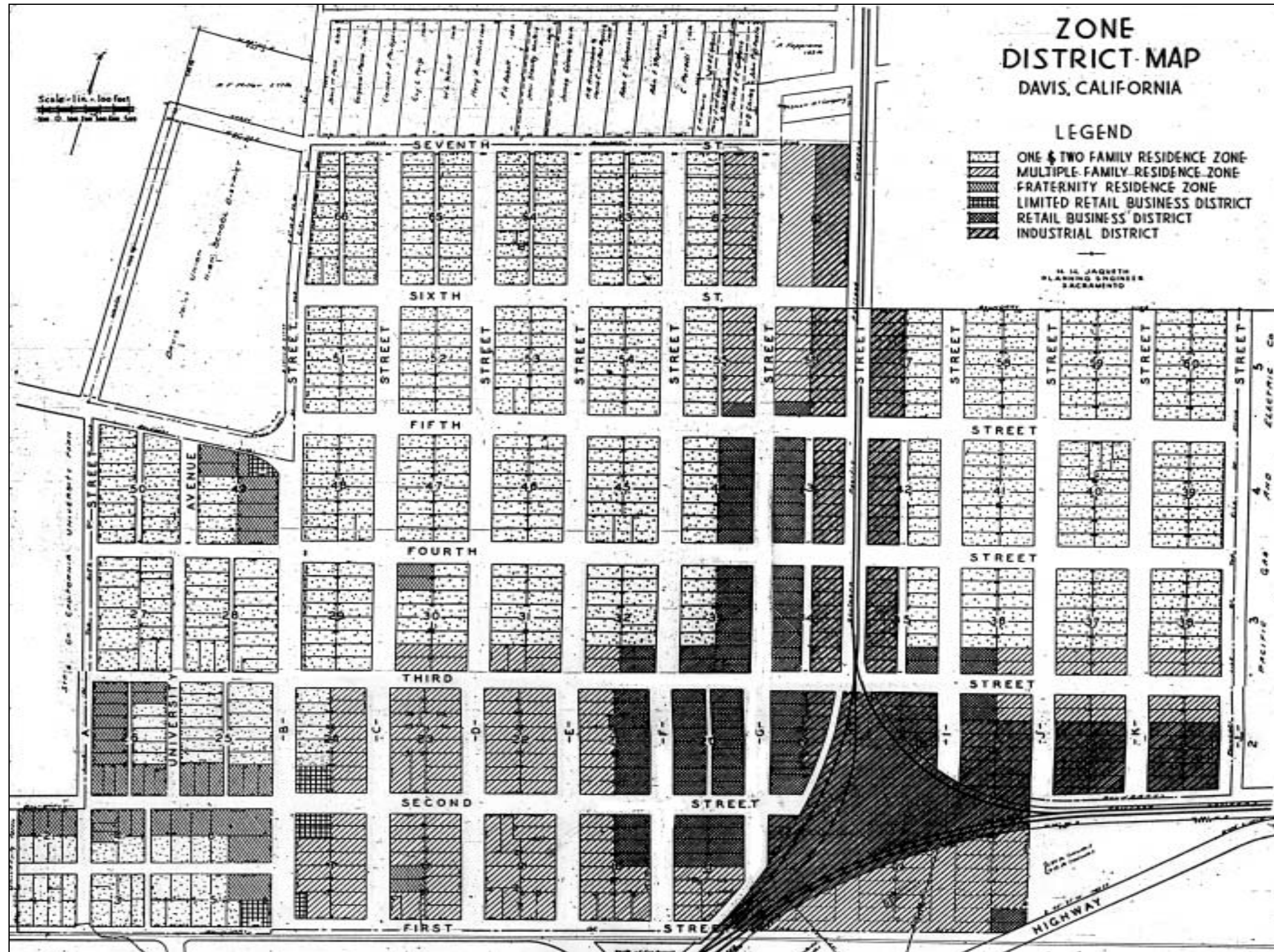
D. SHIFTS IN THE SCHEME OF ZONE CATEGORIES

Map 04 also shows rather large changes in the scheme of zone categories themselves. The language of "Class" with roman numerals for eight awkward and rather concrete categories has been abandoned. It has been replaced with eight more generic, simple and abstract categories. At least this is true for all but the last of the eight. That is, "residence on rear" is in jarringly concrete contrast with the simple and mutually exclusive zones above it on the list



[City of Davis Department of Public Works Historical Map Drawer.]

05. 1939 "Zone District Map"



[Davis Enterprise, Legal Notices, March 3, 1939.]

E. THE 1939 ZONING CODE

Map 05, on page 12, shows a considerable revision in Davis zone thinking in the middle and late 1930s. Even though the physical area of the city has not changed, the density and character of land use has increased a great deal.

The eight category scheme shown on the 1938 map (**Map 04**) has been replaced by a six category scheme, the first level of which is a "one and two family residence zone." Single family has disappeared and "multiple family" provisions have greatly increased, especially in the seven blocks surrounding Second and D streets.

Of major note, there is now a "fraternity resident zone" spreading from the interaction of A and Second streets, with smaller zones of them in other places.

Ordinance Number 84 of February 20, 1939, which **Map 05** visually depicts, seems to eliminate the single family dwelling category. But this is misleading.

The section of Ordinance 84 creating the "one and two family residence district" permits "single family dwellings" without qualification in clause 3-1.11. But the clause immediately following this one allows two family dwellings only "upon securing a Use Permit as required in Section 10."

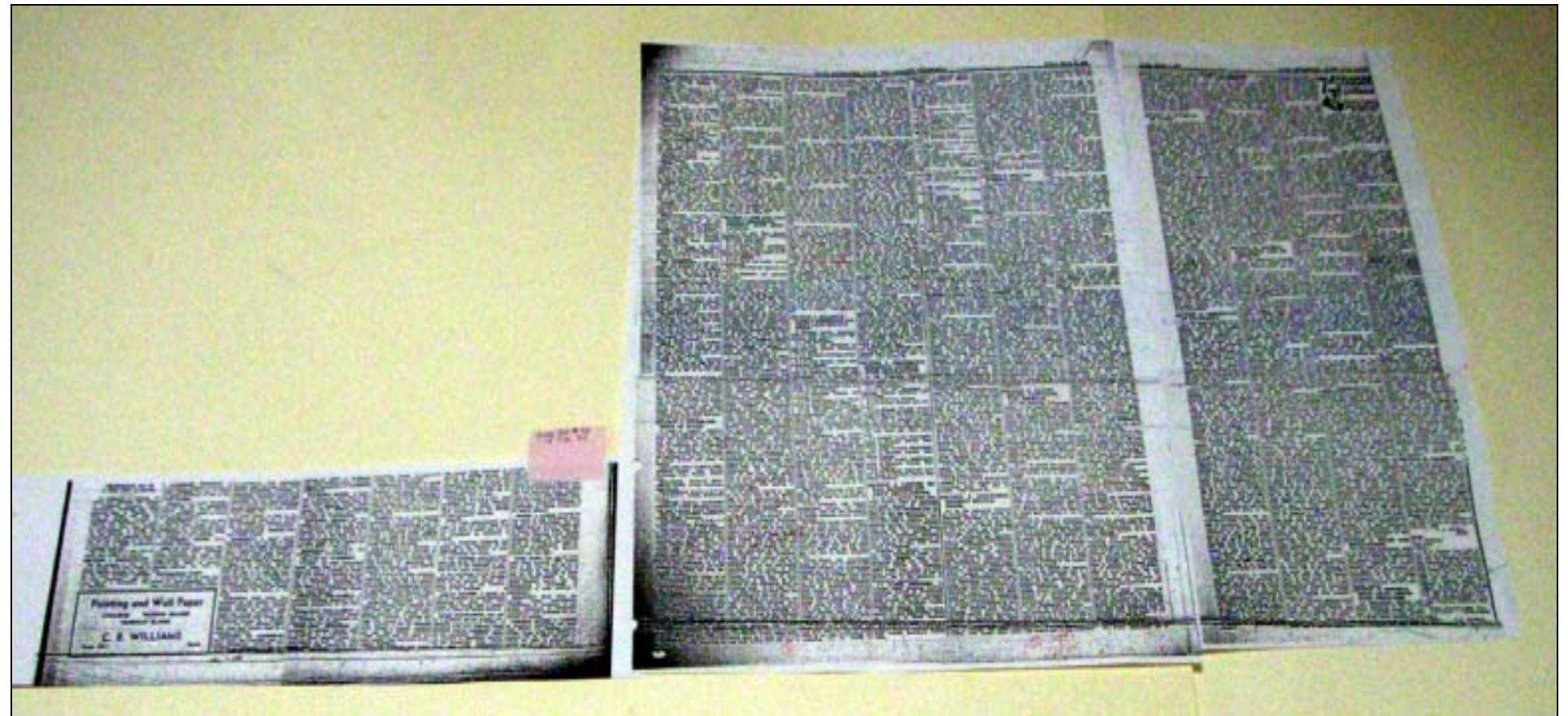
Section 10 is titled "Adjustments, Variances and Appeals." The title and the text of Section 10 make clear that a second dwelling is regarded as possible but an exceptional undertaking.

In addition, site requirements for the "one and two family residence district" worked against placing two dwellings on a lot. These included the following requirements, all of which were presumptions to which there could be exceptions.

1. A building lot shall have "an area of not less than five thousand . . . square feet"
2. "There shall be a front yard of not less than twenty-five . . . feet to the front line of the main portion of the building . . ."
3. "Each interior lot shall have side yards not less than four . . . feet in width each . . ."
4. "Each lot shall have a rear yard not less than twenty-five . . . feet in depth . . ."
5. "Building Height Limit: Two and one-half stories and not exceeding thirty-five . . . in height . . ." (Davis, 1939).

Indicative of the time, Section 16-2.10 of this Ordinance provided that

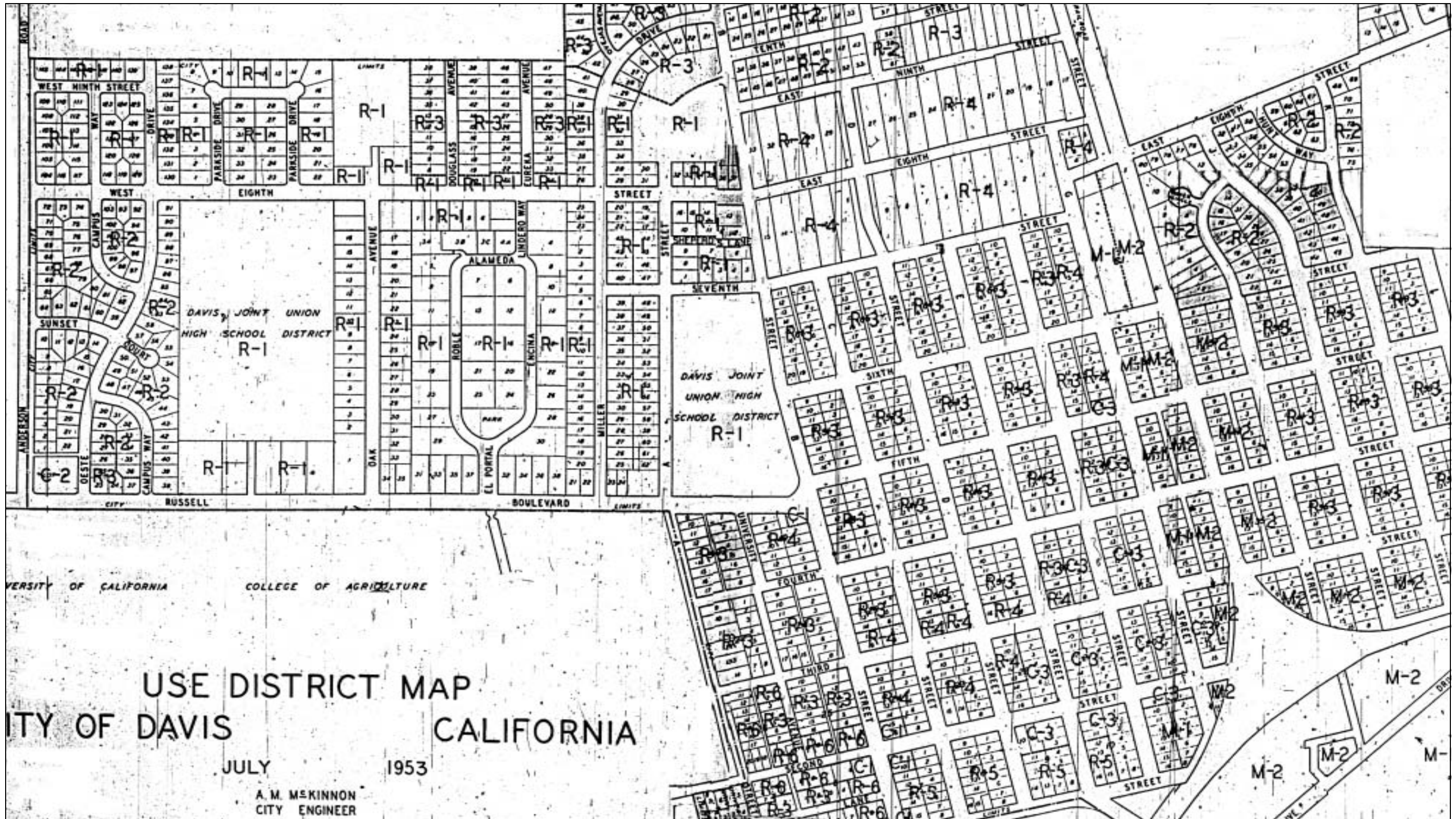
in any Residence Zone there may be kept on any lot not to exceed twelve chicken hens or twelve pigeons and/or twelve rabbits or guinea pigs, provided that no such livestock shall be maintained closer than forty (40) feet to any dwelling . . . No such livestock shall be kept in residence zones for commercial purposes.



Ordinance No. 84 of the City of Davis as printed in the *Davis Enterprise*, January 16, 1939. The first sentence reads, in part: "An Ordinance to regulate, restrict, and segregate the location of . . . uses; to regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings . . . ; to regulate and determine . . . open spaces; for said purposes to divide the city into districts, to provide for enforcement and prescribe penalties for the violation of its provisions."

As can be seen, the code covers about two, seven-column newspaper pages. In contrast, the codified Davis zoning code of 2004, pictured on page 47, was almost an inch thick and ran several hundred pages.

06. 1953 "Use District Map" (Excerpt)



[Davis Enterprise, Legal Notices, July 23, 1953.]

LEGEND	
R-1	ONE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT ZONE NO. I
R-2	ONE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT ZONE NO. II
R-3	TWO FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT ZONE
R-4	MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT ZONE NO. I
R-5	MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT ZONE NO. II
R-6	FRATERNITY RESIDENCE DISTRICT ZONE
C-1	LIMITED RETAIL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONE
C-2	RETAIL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONE NO. I
C-3	RETAIL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONE NO. II
M-1	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT ZONE
M-2	HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT ZONE

II. MEGA-SCALE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, 1950s-1960s

World War II put development plans on hold in Davis, as well as pretty much everywhere else, of course. Also as elsewhere, but especially in California, Davis leaders emerged from that war with expectations of large and rapid growth (Lofland, 2004: Ch. 7).

Despite expectations of and a desire for mega-scale growth, planning for and actions toward it proceeded rather slowly in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was only in the later 1950s and the early 1960s that what one might call "explosive growth fever" colored the outlooks of the Davis civic-minded.

Population growth and territorial expansion in the 1940s and 1950s were not, however, small or trivial. By the mid-1950s, the population had grown to about 6,000. The city had annexed west to Anderson Road, north to Twelfth, and extended L Street north to "square off" with Twelfth. (Some of this is seen in **Map 06**, on page 14)

These few annexations brought the city to something over one square mile. But, by 1970, there would have been 50 annexations and the a city-size of 6.2 square miles (Lofland, 2004:122.) And, the population would be pushing 24,000. (A graph of Davis' highly dramatic population growth is available at www.davishistoricalsociety.org, Folder 1.)

In broad terms, between the end of World War II and 1970, Davis had a twelve-fold increase in area and a ten-fold increase in population (Lofland, 2004:122). So, a lot of thinking about land use and zoning was obviously going on.

A. THE 1953 ZONING CODE

One step along this road was Ordinance 146 of July, 1953, which repealed the 18 previous iterations and provided a new set of specifications. These included the following.

1. The use of letters as codes or zones begins. There are now "R," "C," and the like, a practice continuing to the present.
2. The list of categories of zones grows longer, going from eight to eleven.
3. Types of residence ("R") areas are especially expanded, going from three to six.
4. R-1 and R-2 are both "one family residence," but differ in the size of the lot on which a dwelling can sit. R-1 required a "building site in one ownership having an area of not less than eight thousand (8000) square feet . . ." (Davis, 1953, section 3-3). The R-2 zone is the same as R-1

except that the building site must have an area "not less than five thousand square (5000) square feet . . ." (section 4-3).

The R-3 zone, into which virtually all the Original City of Davis is then placed, is "two family residence." The first provision for this zone is to allow "any use permitted in the One Family Residence Zone" (section 5-2.1). The second (section 5-2.2) is "Two Family Dwellings."

The R-3 site-size requirement is that "each two family dwelling . . . shall be located upon a building site in one ownership having an area of at last six thousand (6000) square feet" (section 5-3).

This area requirement is especially interesting in view of the fact that almost a hundred Old North Davis lots zoned R-3 have areas of 5,6250 square feet. I speak of the five with alleys making up Bowers Addition. Because of the alleys, almost all the lots measure 112.5 by 50 feet rather than 125 by 50 feet, the prevailing size in the original grid. Since a number of two family units were in fact constructed in Bowers Addition in this period, we can assume people either ignored the law or were given a variance.

Also regarding Old North Davis, we see in **Map 06** that the west side of G Street is zoned R-4. This is "Multiple Family Residence District Zone No. 1," the first requirement of which is that "Uses Permitted subject to the securing of a Use Permit in each case . . ." (6-2). This is a departure from "lower" R zones, which do not require a separate Use Permit. This means that much greater oversight and inspection is invoked for this class of residences.

An elaborate list of possible dwelling and other uses follows in this R-4 section. These include hotels, "boarding, lodging, and rooming houses," and "rest homes [and] . . . sanitariums" (6-2).

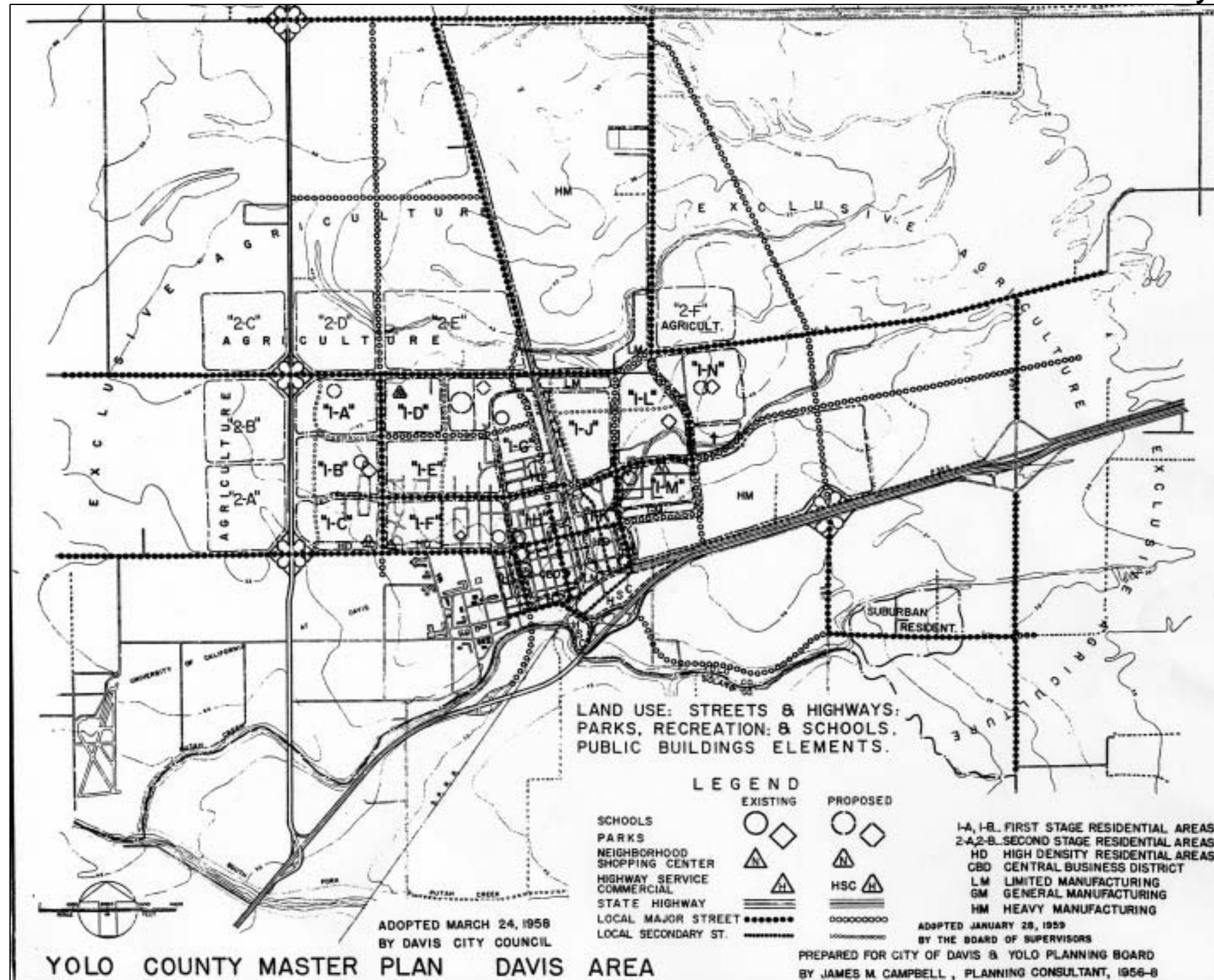
In addition, the two Old North Davis blocks between G Street and the tracks are zoned M-1 (the west side) and M-2 (the east side). As begun with R-4, any use requires a separate Use Permit.

The provisions for both these zones consist almost entirely of lists of many things that are **not** allowed! Such exclusions in the "Light Industrial District Zone" include cooperage works, bottling works and nut and fruit processing. Exclusions in the Heavy Industrial are extremely detailed and the list concludes:

and in general those uses which may be obnoxious or offensive by reason of emission of odor, dust, smoke, gas, noise or vibration (13-2.2).

Recall that the 1939 zoning code prohibited more than twelve of various small livestock and required that they be at least 40 feet from a dwelling. No such provision was in the 1953 code. This, though, did not mean that keeping lots of livestock close to a dwelling had been made legal. Instead, the on-going elaboration and systematization of law had placed these provisions elsewhere.

07. 1958 "Yolo County Master Plan Davis Area"



[Yolo County, 1958:28.]

B. THE 1958 YOLO COUNTY MASTER PLAN, INCLUDING DAVIS

Many of the most important changes in Davis have been stimulated by outside (often government) agencies, rather than by internal citizen initiative. Such was clearly the case in the struggle to build the City's water and sewage systems (Lofland, 2004: 56-7, 62-4), and it also appears to have been the case with the advent of a truly large-scale plan for growth.

As seen, Davis leaders were expanding the city in the early 1950s, but their actions were small-scale and incremental. It was the County of Yolo, in the form of its "Yolo County Master Plan Project," that began to think big and broad for all of the county, most particularly for the then three incorporated areas of Davis, Woodland, and Winters (Yolo County, 1958).

The 28 page stapled and typed booklet titled *Master Plan of the City of Davis* developed by "planning consultant" James M. Campbell says, in its first sentence, that the Davis plan is "part of the comprehensive Master Plan" and "designed . . . with objectives . . . [and] standards related to and compatible with the total plan." (The document is pictured to the right on this page.)

While clearly a project of the county, a Davis citizen committee was also reported as having worked on it for two years (DE, 3-27-58). Considered at two Planning Commission public hearings, that body adopted the Plan in January, 1958, followed by the City Council in March.

The Plan's area map, reproduced here as **Map 07** on page 16, shows the scope and scale of the new mindset. Extending beyond existing boundaries in every direction, the new landscape of planning reached, roughly, to County Road 29 on the north, Road 104 on the east, Putah Creek on the south, and Road 99 on the west. (Today, these are named Road 29, Mace Blvd. and Lake Blvd., respectively).

The amount of growth is conceived in two categories: "First Stage" versus "Ultimate." At the end of the immediate First Stage, the population would be in the range of 22,000. At Ultimate build-out under the plan (in an unspecified year), the population of Davis would be about 33,000. Intentionally, no year when either of these numbers would be reached was specified, although some people projected 33,000 by 1980 (Davis, 1964: 1).

On **Map 07** (page 16) we see the outline of how this was to happen. Most conspicuous is the distinction between areas beginning with a number versus a capital letter.

Numbered areas, as in "1" and "2" are residential neighborhoods of, mostly, low density. **Lettered** areas are commercial, manufacturing, and tellingly, high density residential. (Apartment houses are thus regarded as more like heavy manufacturing than neighborhoods.)

Among the numbered areas, those called "1" already exist on the ground or were already approved in Davis planning. "2" areas are called "FUTURE" and kept as agricultural "until such time as . . . a need for transition . . . to . . . residential classification" (Yolo County, 1958:14). As can be seen, there are six of these and all of them have long since been substantially if not fully developed.

Regarding Old North Davis and nearby areas, let us examine the "1" series of zones, those lettered A through N, 14 of them in all.

The 14 areas are termed "neighborhoods" and proposed to be entirely low density, entirely high density, or to contain zones of each.

Low density is defined as "One to five families per gross acre." High density is "six to twenty-four families per gross acre."

Entirely low density "1" zones are: A, B, D, E, L, M, N

Mixed high and low density zones "1" are: C, F, G, J, K,

High density "1" zones are: H, I

It is notable that only two of the many areas already built up were slated to be entirely high density. And, it is revealing to inspect which areas were so designated and those that were not.

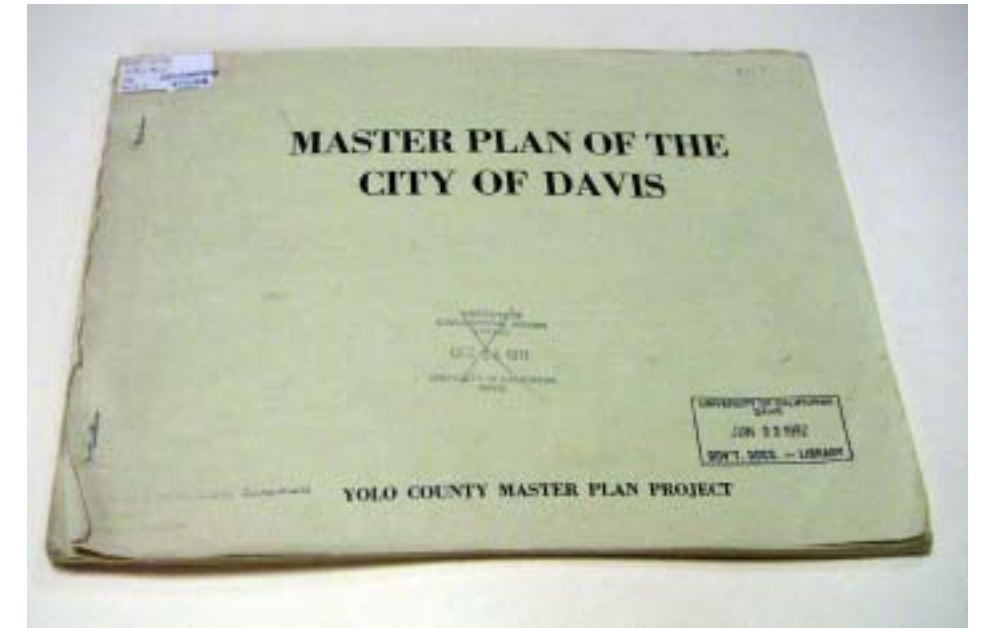
Area F, which contains College Park, Elmwood and Oeste Manor were written of in this fashion:

This developed area will keep the general character it now has except that the high density strip along Russell Boulevard may convert to apartments and fraternity houses (p. 11).

But when we move east, the adjacent **H and I areas** are zoned high density and spoken of in this fashion:

[H, Old North Davis:] This substantially developed area is proposed for high density development (p. 12).

[I, University/Rice:] This high density area contains two parts which do not constitute a true neighborhood. . . . They are proposed for apartment and fraternity house development (p. 12).

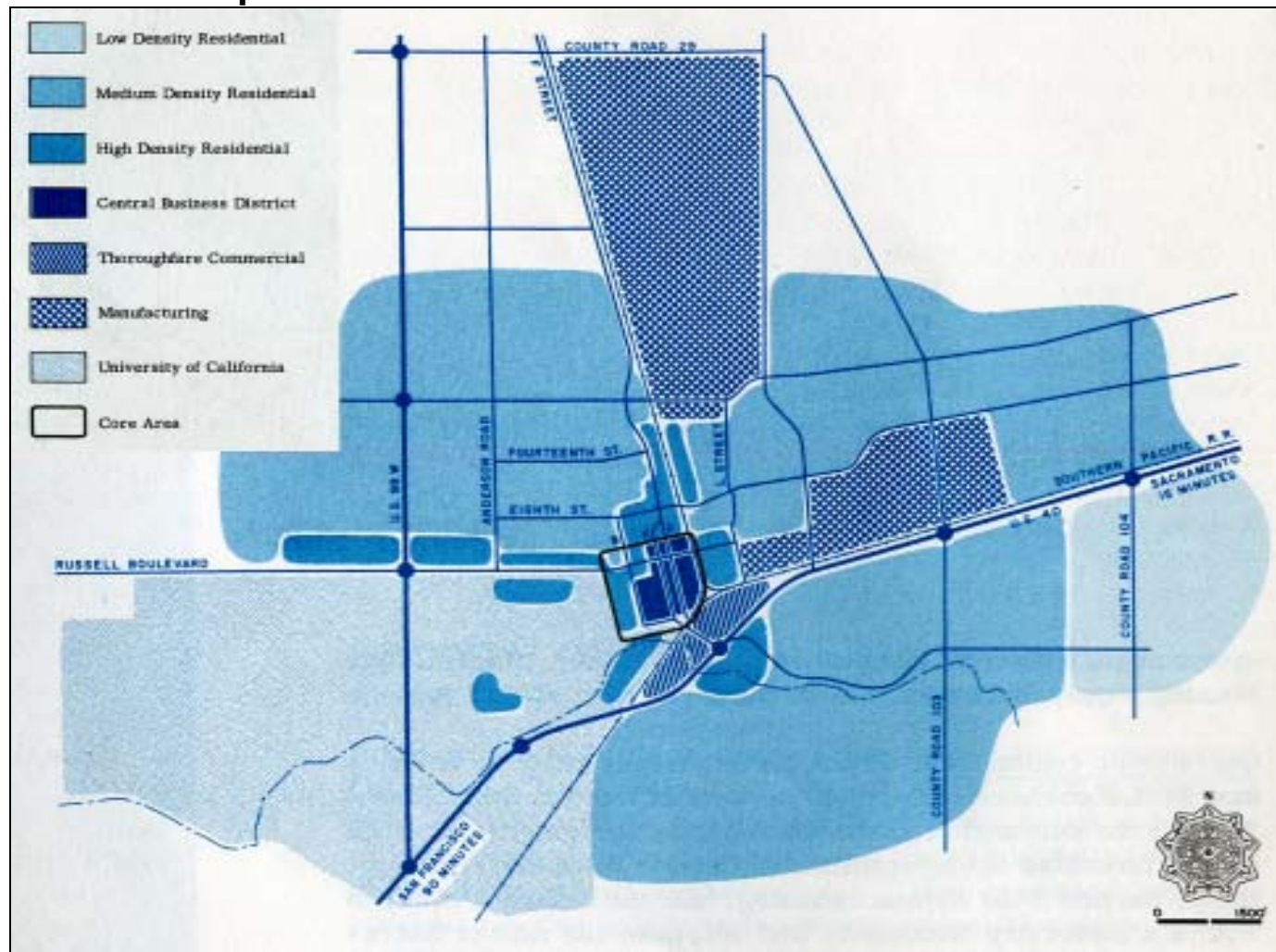


1958 Master Plan of the City of Davis, an element of the Yolo County Master Plan Project; stapled and printed landscape on letter-sized paper; typescript text; 28 pages.

So there it is. A major shift in the view of the future of a good part of Original City has taken place. Areas H and I were, at the start, the essence of Davis combined with the G Street downtown. Now, and apparently without a great deal of local thought given to the decision, two significant parts of Original Davis was slated for demolition.

If this were not amazing enough, yet more dramatic visions of mega-growth were yet to come.

08. 1961 Proposed 1985 Land Use



[Livingston & Blaney, 1961:13.]

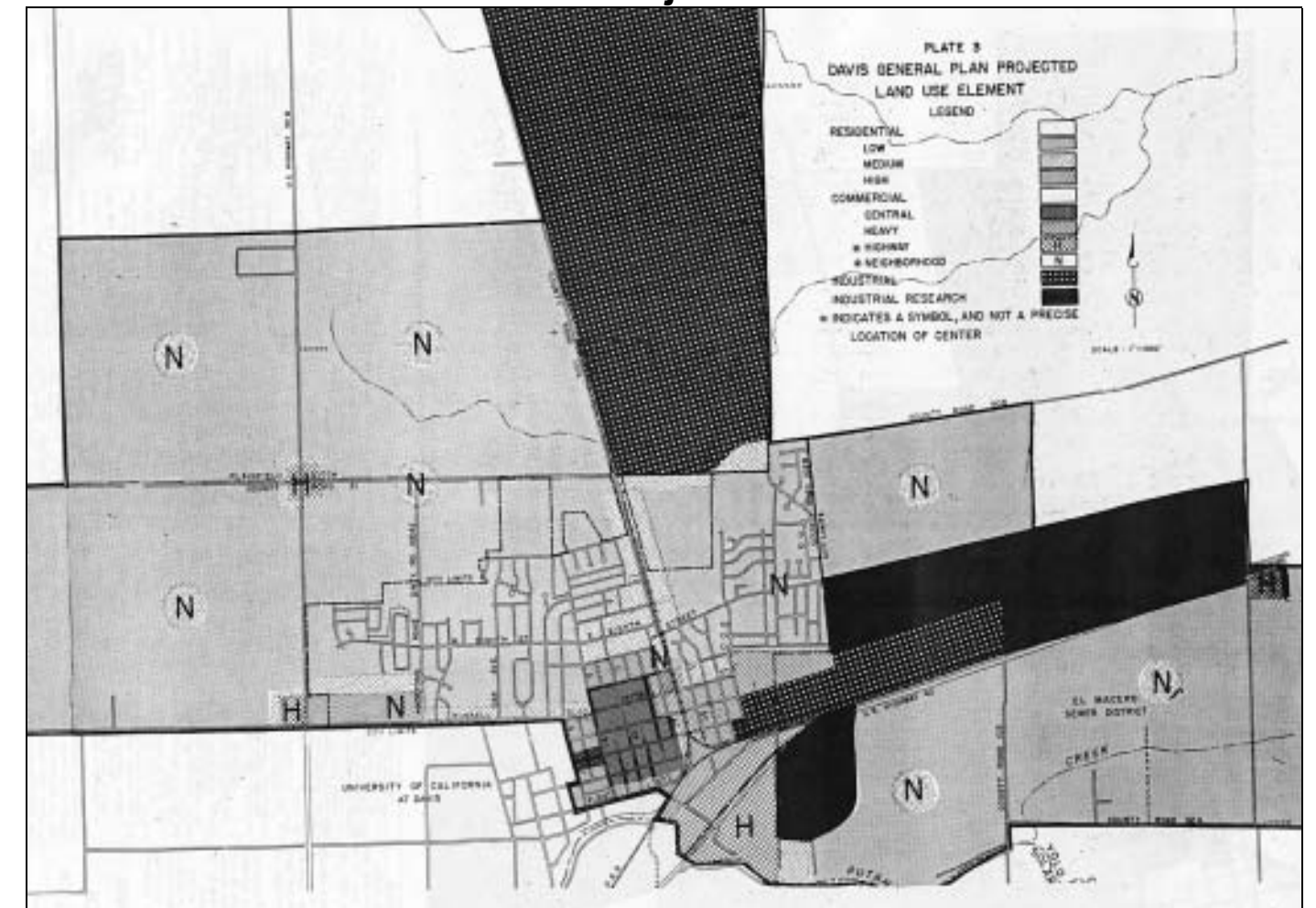


LAWRENCE LIVINGSTON, Jr., partner in the firm of Livingston and Blaney, city and regional planners, now conducting the core area survey in Davis, will sketch a realistic picture of this community's possible future when he addresses the chamber of commerce annual membership meeting next Wednesday night, open to the public.

Livingston at the age of 42 has attained wide recognition in his field, since becoming a partner in the consultant firm in 1959 in San Francisco, his birthplace. From 1953 to that time, he was city and regional planning consultant for the city and county of San Francisco and presently is a member of virtually all national and regional associations of planners, consultants and councils. He is a member of the Commonwealth Club of California and is a Phi Beta Kappa.

[Davis Enterprise, 2-12-61.]

08.1. 1964 "Davis General Plan Projected Land Use Element"



[Map accompanying Davis, 1964.]



Livingston & Blaney, *Davis Core Area Plan*, blue-grey cover, 11 by 14 inches, staple bound, 44 pages, some copies printed in color.

C. THE 1961 LIVINGSTON-BLAYNEY DAVIS CORE AREA PLAN

The 1958 general plan for Davis importantly developed by Yolo County and its consultant James M. Campbell only opened the door to more extra-Davis planners with mega-scale visions. Led and urged by city Administrator Frank Fargo and his successor Walter Birkelo, in early 1960 the city applied for a matching urban planning grant from the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency. The application was worked up and written by the Birkelo-recommended firm of Livingston and Blayney (L&B). This firm would get a \$500 fee if the application was unsuccessful and a contract of almost \$23,000 to do a Davis "core area" plan if it was successful. The Davis grant was one part of a larger package of planning grants to local governments and their award was announced in July, 1960. Advised by a 60-some member Davis Core Area Citizen's Advisory Committee divided into six subcommittees, L&B set to work

After some preliminary reports at public meetings, they made a "semi-final report" calling for "do or die" before a packed council chamber on July 31, 1961. After giving a "picture of what the central 'core area' of Davis may be," L&B admonished the audience to "start now, before it is too late or stand pat and wither on the vine" (DE, 8-3-61). Enterprise reporter C. E. Woodward wrote:

At the end of the two-hour meeting very few questions were asked from the audience. The dream of a "really beautiful and modern Davis" left most of them apparently in a semi-trance. Either that or partially stunned by the dimensions of the task lying ahead (DE, 8-3-61).

As well the plan should have done. From our perspective today, it was grandiose to the point of the bizarre—but Davis elites of the time bought it.

1. DAVIS PROJECTED TO 1985. At the level of the entire city, three planning projections were of special significance.

1. A population of about 10,000 in 1960 was projected to grow to 75,000 in 1985. This is growth of some 22,000 people a decade. A number such as 22,000 has little meaning without context, so consider that in the seven decades between 1860 and 1940, the town had grown hardly at all. In the next two decades, from 1940 to 1960, population increased two and five thousand, respectively. (Davis population history is graphed at www.davishistoricalsociety.org, folder 1.) So, a proposed jump to 22,000 in a decade was breathtaking, which may also explain the silent reaction the Enterprise reporter describes above. But, Davisites gave it a go. The 1960-70 increase was 15 thousand, not so far off the mark, one might say.

2. The land use map L&B proposed for 1985 envisioned this explosive growth within pretty much the existing or already planned footprint of the City. Since the existing city was almost entirely low density, how could such vast growth be accommodated? The answer was a steep increase in density throughout the city, and especially in the newly invented "core area." Inspecting **Map 08**, we see that L&B have re-designated the vast bulk of the city "medium density residential," up from the then-existing (and still existing) single family low density.

3. Although L&B proposed greatly increased density for the entire city, their attention was focused on the "core area," shown outlined with a black line in **Map 08** on page 18. Here, the area not designated "Central Business District" (in solid black) is zoned "high density residential," and such zoning extends along Russell, as well as along other major streets.

It is one thing to propose a city-wide land use scheme, it is another thing for officials to adopt it. In this case, with a few modifications, Davis officials largely bought the L&B overall scheme. **Map 08.1** is from a document adopted in 1964. Although not identical, it closely resembles L&B's 1961 map, which is **Map 08** and shown next to **Map 08.1** on page 18. (A major exception is that the bulk of Davis is left in "low density residential.")

2. THE "CORE AREA" VISION. But L&B were contracted to plan the "core area" rather than the entire city (even though planning one without the other makes little sense). So, the booklet containing the plan they produced is titled *Davis Core Area Plan* (1961) (and pictured on page 18).

One of several maps picturing the projected core area is reproduced as **Map 08.2** on page 20. Unlike some other maps in their report, this one is overlaid with phased-years of development lines and traffic patterns. But the underlying projected picture of the area in 1985 remains visible.

On the page facing **Map 08.2**, I have reproduced L&B's map of actual land use in the core area in 1961. It is **Map 09** on page 22. As we scan our eyes back and forth between these two maps, what do we see?

1. Virtually all the buildings existing in 1961 would be removed by 1985. **L&B envisioned almost total demolition of the original and historic, Davis.**

That is, **Maps 08.2** and **Map 09** show almost totally different sets of footprints of structures, requiring, of course, massive demolition.

2. The southern half of Old North Davis has vanished. The house in which I live mid-block on E Street was, by 1985, to have been replaced by "stores and offices" and an expansive parking lot across the street from the site of that home.

3. The replacement structures were to be high-rise apartment or office buildings surrounded by large parking lots and/or vacant and useless green spaces (also called "dead zones").

4. L&B's text tells us that E and F Streets have each been made three lanes of traffic wide and one way, with F going under the railroad through a new tunnel.

5. In this plan, the centerpiece of the core area had become the "Third Street parade" connecting the UC campus and the downtown. Cars would not be allowed on Third Street, although a major bike lane would run down its middle.

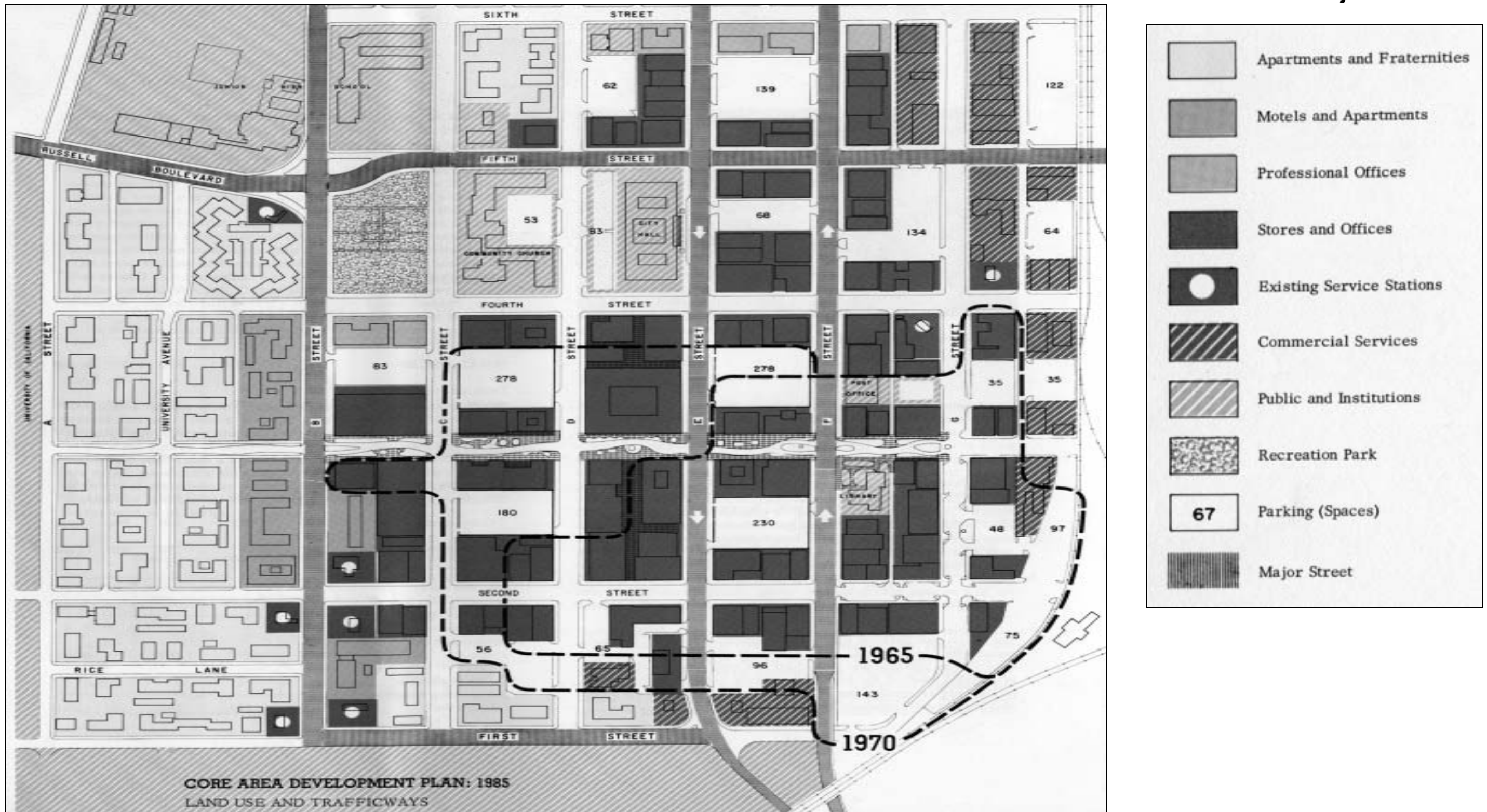
6. The original Second and G streets retail center of the town was now obsolete. Re-centering and accommodation to the automobile required shifting the retail center closer to Third and E streets. Additionally, a new civic center was to be constructed on the block bounded by D and E and Fourth and Fifth. (This is the block with the fire station, the only new civic center building ever actually constructed on that block).

3. THE LARGER CONTEXT. Although L&B's vision of Davis in 1985 was audacious, it's tenor was typical and mainstream at the time. These two men seemed to be disciples of an approach to urban design (and life more generally) that has been termed "high modernist" and that was in fashion in the first decades after World War II. As a philosophy, high modernism was a faith in the possibility of "a sweeping, rational engineering of all aspects of social life in order to improve the human condition" (Scott, 1998:88).

High modernist urban planning applied this faith to cities. Its most famous, if extreme, exemplar was a Swiss-born architect named Charles-Edouard Jeanneret who reinvented himself as a visionary planner under the name Le Corbusier. Features of the high-modernist, Le Corbusier city seen in the L&B plan include the following.

1. Also sometimes termed "authoritarian high modernism," high modernist city plans envisioned a city that controlled its component areas from the center. Indeed, the dominant and powerful center was explicitly likened to the "brain" of the city in Le Corbusier plans. The L&B concept of the "core area" is very much in this centralized and dominating vein. Although the idea of a "vital" downtown was sold as "saving" the "traditional" downtown, the "core area" program was also a form of rule from center at the expense of neighborhoods, which were to be kept dependant and underdeveloped. (This part of the L&B plan was in fact carried out, leading to the anemic and seriously under developed neighborhoods seen in Davis today.)

08.2. 1961 Core Area Land Use Projection for 1985



[Livingston and Blayney, 1961:19.]